

Remarks

The Applicants note with appreciation the withdrawal of the previous art rejections and the allowability of Claims 1, 5 – 9 and 13 – 21 if amended to overcome rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112.

The Applicants note the Examiner's helpful comments concerning the complete certified copies of both Japanese priority applications. The Applicants respectfully submit that those complete copies were already submitted by the Applicants in a timely fashion as indicated in the enclosed copy of the Applicants' postcard with the Patent Office date of receipt marked March 26, 2002. Apparently, the Patent Office lost the certified copies. The Applicants therefore have obtained yet another set of certified copies and enclose them for the Examiner's convenience. The Applicants respectfully submit that the claim for priority has now been perfected twice and request that the record reflect such perfection of the priority claim.

The Applicants note with appreciation the indication of compliance with respect to the Applicants' last filed Information Disclosure Statement.

The Applicants note the objection to selected ones of the amendments made to Table 1 under 35 U.S.C. §132(a). The Applicants note that the amendment referred to in the objection as having been filed on March 9, 2004, was in fact filed on May 13, 2003, and received in the Patent Office on May 15, 2003. Apparently, that Amendment was also lost by the Patent Office and re-submitted by the Applicants on March 9, 2004, as requested by the Patent Office. In any event, the Applicants have amended Table 1 to restore it to its original form. The Applicants have further amended Table 1 in accordance with the Examiner's helpful suggestion with respect to correction of the spelling error. The Applicants have also amended the Specification to place it into more contemporary form.

The Applicants note the rejection of Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §112 with respect to "10 or more." The rejection indicates that support for the "10 or more" language cannot be seen in the

Applicants' Specification. In that regard, the Applicants invite the Examiner's attention to paragraph [0065] on page 20, beginning at line 5 of that page, wherein that text states that an obvious degree of precipitation of sulfur of 10 or more was observed in the samples in Examples 1 – 6 containing 0.1% by mass or less of Mn with higher TCE dehalogenation rate constants. Lines 7, 8 and 9 further state that the TCE dehalogenation rate constant becomes higher as the degree of precipitation of sulfur is increased to 20, 30 and so on.

The Applicants respectfully submit that one skilled in the art can readily see that the degree of precipitation referred to in Claim 17 is the same as the degree of precipitation referred to in paragraph [0065]. Thus, the Applicants respectfully submit that the "10 or more" language is literally present in the Specification at line 5 and is, in spirit, also in the Applicants' Specification on line 9 by virtue of the "20, 30 and so on" language. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the subject matter of Claim 17 is fully supported. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 17 is respectfully requested.

The Applicants have, in any event, added a new Claim 22 that recites that the degree of surface precipitation of the Fe-S based inorganic compounds is 10 – 30. Of course, the Applicants respectfully submit that this range is literally supported, as helpfully noted by the Examiner. Entry into the Official File and consideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

The Applicants note the rejection of Claims 1, 5 – 9 and 13 – 21 under 35 U.S.C. §112 and the Examiner's helpful comments concerning potential amendments to Claims 1, 13, 14, 16 and 18. Those suggestions have been adopted and appropriate amendments to those respective claims have been made. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the entire Application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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